

Hebrews 4:11

Labor to Rest

Rest is something that we hunger for and long for, especially in this overbooked, overstressed, overburdened world that we have created for ourselves. I saw a sign that read "When phones were chained with a wire, men were free" - I don't think that our cell phones have to carry all of the blame, but they don't help. The truth of the matter is that we need rest. And the promise of rest is ours in Christ. However we must understand that we are not really fit for the rest that is promised. We need to be conditioned in order to be prepared for it. This creates one of those verbal conundrums which confuse the lost and the saved alike... the idea of laboring to rest. So this morning I would like to think with you about what it means for us to work diligently to enter our rest, how we do it, what it does NOT mean and how to prepare yourself for the most important and restful work you will ever do.

I. DILIGENT - TO LABOR INTENTLY

Diligence comprises both the power of the bowstring that fires the arrow, and the feather that keeps it true to its aim.

a. Some other translations will help us gather the sense of the word...

- i. NIV - make every effort
- ii. ESV - strive
- iii. NLT - do our best
- iv. KJV - labor
- v. NCV - try as hard as we can
- vi. Weymouth - let it be our earnest endeavor
- vii. AMP - (not ever to be outdone) - zealous and exert ourselves and strive diligently to enter that rest of God, to know and experience it for ourselves...

b. Diligio, the Latin word from which diligence is derived, means I choose, select, or love. To be diligent, therefore, is to resemble an eager hunter, who selects the fattest of

the herd, and, leaving the rest, pursues and captures that one.

- i. Napoleon the First won his victories chiefly by rapid concentration of his forces on one point of the enemy's line.
 - ii. A magnifying glass is can start a fire because it focuses a mass of sunbeams on one point.
- c. So in all areas of activity, to have one thing to do, and then to do it, is the secret of success.
- d. The need for diligence: — God is sovereign over all, but that does not mean that we are to lean on a shovel and pray for a hole!!

II. WHY ARE WE LABORING?

- a. Not working to earn salvation
 - i. Work out with fear and trembling

1. Not of Him who works

Romans 9.10-18

2. Salvation not of works –

Ephesians 2.8-10

b. Laboring to improve

i. to have the whole person wet in the grace of God's love

Philippians 2.12-13

ii. To increase our appreciation of the rest by its own growth

1. To see the promise of our joy and rest shared among all that we love

2. To see the glory of Jesus spread over the whole earth

3. To increase the rewards of worship will be the currency of heaven

iii. To increase our current awareness of and hunger for the prize

1. Keep us faithful in temptation
2. Keep us growing in grace
3. Keep us honoring Christ purposefully
4. Keep us strong in the fight

iv. To rest in THIS age

1. Spiritual labor provides mental and physical rest
2. The chaos of the age bleeds off
3. The wind of heaven refreshes our soul
4. The glory of Christ empowers our return to other more mundane labors

III. WHAT IS THIS LABOR?

a. Mental - set your mind on the things above, focused and intent

2 Corinthians 5.9-11

Colossians 3.1-4

b. Painful diligence, sacrificial purpose

Colossians 3.4-11

c. Spiritual Calisthenics

Colossians 3.12-17

d. Hasty fervor, the night is well spent

Romans 13.11-14

e. Careful of our own soul –

1 Corinthians 9.24-27

IV. HOW ARE WE TO LABOR?

a. What is the character of our labor?

i. Willingly

- ii. Cheerfully
- iii. Diligently
- iv. Whole heartedly
- v. Constantly
- vi. With fear and trembling
- vii. Faithfully
- viii. Evangelically

b. What are the tools

i. Study of the word

- 1. Every one of us
- 2. Daily
- 3. Diligently
- 4. Alone
- 5. Early and late
- 6. Always

ii. Prayer

- 1. We need God in our lives
- 2. His Spirit prays on our behalf
- 3. We enter the throne room of God

4. We have the promise of answer
- iii. Christian fellowship
 1. Our brothers and sisters keep us aimed true
 2. Practicing our faith among others hones us
 3. Our loves are often shaped by those we surround ourselves with

- iv. Evangelism

1. Sharing makes it sweeter
2. It spreads the glory of Jesus
3. It enlarges the kingdom
4. Christ is honored
5. We are grown

V. WHAT IS THE WARNING?

- a. Do not fall away as those who did before
 - i. Setting that which they were laboring for aside

- ii. Forgetting their own promised end
 - iii. Not believing God
 - iv. Disobedience manifested in ruin
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- b. Remind yourself often of the things of God
 - i. Our hearts are fickle
 - ii. Our eyes wander and our hearts follow
 - iii. We need God daily - you cannot accomplish any of this without His manifest daily presence

VI. WHAT IS THE PRIZE?

- a. Heaven itself
- b. The person of Christ
- c. The undiluted, manifest presence of God
- d. To know even as we are ourselves known
- e. Worship without end
- f. Joy without bounds
- g. Rest without diminishment